



STEAMBOAT SPRINGS SCHOOL DISTRICT RE-2

phone: 970-871-3199
fax: 970-879-3943

Dr. Brad Meeks
Superintendent

325 7th Street
Steamboat Springs, CO 80487

Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street SW
Washington, DC 20554

September 16, 2013

Dear Sir/Madame,

I am writing today in response to the FCC's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking which, among other things, proposes changes to the E-Rate program. Before delving into my response to the proposed changes, I want to first thank the FCC for your continued support for the E-Rate program. The E-Rate program provides critical discounts to assist schools (like mine) to obtain affordable telecommunications and internet access.

Steamboat Springs School District is located in rural northwest Colorado and has an enrollment of slightly more than 2400 students. The district has two K-5 elementary schools, a 6-8 middle school, 9-12 high school and a K-8 charter school. Our district relies on the E-rate program to help support our internet and technology needs.

The E-Rate program is a program succeeding in its mission. As the FCC moves forward with this NPRM, it is prudent to remain focused on the fact that E-Rate is a program that works and that any changes to the E-Rate program should be focused on expanding a successful program that has yet to reach its full potential. The current program, while needing some marginal updates to its structure, is most strained by increasing demand for E-Rate-supported services and persistently low funding. The single most effective step the FCC can take to bolster E-Rates current and future success is to provide \$5 billion in funding, an amount commensurate with current demand.

There are additional programmatic changes and restructuring that can provide additional efficiencies and savings. To rely solely on programmatic efficiencies, however, without providing additional new funding is a shortsighted solution, a policy that fails to address the program's most significant problem: inadequate funding.

I think this NPRM is an opportunity to tackle the important work of expanding a successful program. E-Rate is not a broken program that needs to be fixed; it is a successful program that schools and libraries continue to rely on, a program that must continue to provide funding critical for telecommunications and connectivity.

As you review the E-rate program, our school district and key community anchor institutions continue to discuss ways in which to ensure our broadband capabilities are abundant, redundant and economical. Being located in a rural mountainous area, it is a challenge to have the needed high capacity broadband at an affordable cost. The E-rate program provides the opportunity and hope that our students require in order to be able to experience the needed technology that 21st Century skills require.

Thank you for considering my response as you move forward with your decision on the E-Rate program. I applaud the FCC for its continued efforts to protect the already oversubscribed E-Rate program by ensuring the future of this successful program. I urge you to support significant increased funding for the E-Rate program, and to ensure that the program and its limited resources are protected and preserved.

Sincerely,

Dr. Brad Meeks